

12. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 8, wherein a second indication is given after a monetary unit is deposited in dependence on parameters including the money available for change and the value of the deposited monetary unit.*

13. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 12, wherein the circumstances giving rise to the second indication also cause the deposited monetary unit to be refunded.*

14. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 8, which is operable to prevent vending of a product when the deposited money minus the available change exceeds the product price by more than a predetermined non-zero allowable overpay amount.*

15. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 14, including means enabling alteration of a stored parameter defining the predetermined allowable overpay amount.*

16. *A vending machine which is operable to accept payments in units of different denominations, to dispense change corresponding to the difference between a received payment and a vend price, and to store received payments either in a first store permitting subsequent dispensing therefrom by the machine as change or in a second store which does not permit such subsequent dispensing, depending upon the denomination of the payment unit, wherein the machine has a display means and is operable to cause the display means to provide a first indication when the amount of available change is less than the value of the highest-denomination coin storable in the second store, and a second indication when the amount of the received payment exceeds the available change by more than a predetermined allowable overpay amount.*

17. *A vending machine which is operable to accept payments in units of different denominations, to dispense change corresponding to the difference between a received payment and a vend price, and to store received payments either in a first store permitting subsequent dispensing therefrom by the machine as change or in a second store which does not permit such subsequent dispensing, depending upon the denomination of the payment unit, wherein the machine has a display means and is operable to cause the display means to provide a first indication when the amount of available change is less than the value of the highest-denomination coin storable in the second store, and a second indication when the difference between a credit value and a vend price exceeds the available change by more than a predetermined allowable overpay amount.*

18. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 16 or 17, wherein the second indication is provided for a predetermined interval.*

19. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 16 or 17, including a common display means for displaying both the first indication and the second indication.*

20. *A vending machine which has a display means and which is operable, in response to selection of a product for vending, to compare the difference between the value of deposited money and the product price with the available change, and to inhibit the vend if that difference exceeds a predetermined allowable overpay amount, the machine being operable in these circumstances also to cause the display means to provide an "insufficient change" indication and to allow selection of a product of different price.*

D1
25. (Amended) A vending machine which is operable to prevent acceptance of a monetary unit in dependence on the availability of monetary units for dispensing as change and operable to inhibit a vend operation in dependence on a vend price, a credit value corresponding to the value of one or more accepted monetary units and the availability of monetary units for dispensing as change, said vending machine having display means arranged to provide an indication to a customer in response to receipt of a monetary unit which is so prevented from being accepted.

D2
27. (Amended) A vending machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the display means is arranged to provide an indication to a customer when a vend operation is inhibited.

28. (Amended) A vending machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the machine is arranged, when a vend has been inhibited, to allow a customer to select a vend at a different price.

29. *A vending machine comprising:
means for accepting payments in units of different denominations, for performing vends, for determining that insufficient change is available, and for dispensing change, wherein if insufficient change is available then either (i) a lesser amount of change is dispensed or (ii) a requested vend is inhibited depending on whether the difference between the available change and the correct change is equal to or less than a predetermined allowable overpay amount;*

means for providing a warning indication prior to initiating a transaction if the available change meets a predetermined criteria and if the allowable overpay amount is non-zero; and

means for permitting alteration of a stored parameter defining the allowable overpay amount.

Applicant : Billington et al.
Serial No. : 09/543,164
Filed : April 5, 2000
Page : 4

Attorney's Docket No.: 07703-332001 / MEK-
197/I.25273 US

30. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 29, wherein the predetermined criterion is met when the available change is less than the value of the lowest denomination non-refundable payment unit.*

31. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 29, which is operable to provide an "exact change" indication to a customer when a requested vend is inhibited.*

32. *A vending machine as claimed in claim 31, wherein the machine is operable, when inhibiting a vend, to permit the customer to request a vend at a different price.*